7071

A LETTER TO DOCTOR PRIESTLEY,

IN CONSEQUENCE OF HIS

"FAMILIAR LETTERS ADDRESSED TO THE INHABITANTS OF THE TOWN OF BIRMINGHAM, &c."

OCCASIONED BY

A SERMON PREACHED AT ST. PHILIP's CHURCH, IN BIRMINGHAM,

ON SUNDAY FEBRUARY, 14, 1790,

BY THE REV. SPENCER MADAN,

RECTOR OF ST. PHILIP'S.

Avulsum est enim præter spem quod erat spe devoratum Lucrum. At queritur: impudenter facit. Non enim omnia quæ dolemus eadem jure queri possumus. At accusat verbis gravissimis: non civitas, sed imperiti homines a Mæandrio concitati.

CICERO.

BIRMINGHAM:

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BRITISH MUSEUM

A LETTER, &c.

REV. SIR,

DURING a ſhort abſence from this place, I find you have thought proper to addreſs ſome 'familiar letters to the inhabitants 'of the town of Birmingham,' in reference to a ſermon which I lately printed at the requeſt of many of my pariſhioners. Perhaps, Sir, from the circumſtance of that publication you may expect to find in me a haſty polemic, as much infected with Juvenal's ſcribendi cacoethes as yourſelf: but my reaſons for giving a local circulation to that ſermon were ſtated in the preface; ſtrengthened, it is true, by one additional inducement, which they who have inſinuated that I advance falſe doctrines of any kind within the walls of my church, will beſt underſtand. At the ſame time I am ſo little jealous of the honors, or envious of the happineſs which you ſeem to derive from a perpetual immerſion and floundering in the troubled waters of controverſy, that I ſhall never more conſent to bear the part which I now take in your favourite amuſement of 'familiar letters,' pertinent replies,

rejoinders, ſurrejoinders, and ſo forth, eſpecially with a perſon whoſe never-ceaſing pen will perſiſt, at all events, in claiming that conſtructive triumph which every man may award to himſelf by having the laſt word in a diſpute. (A)

But if the reaſons which diſſuade me from this fruitleſs employment of my time, and this endleſs exertion of my patience, were leſs deciſive than they are, ſtill, it ſeems, the youth and ignorance of ſo inconcluſive a diſputant as I am ſhould effectually prevent me from entering the liſts with ſuch an old and learned controverſialiſt as Doctor Prieſtley! I ſhould be an opponent, Sir, unworthy of your proweſs, a victim unworthy of your wrath! For theſe united reaſons, then, I ſhall only offer you *this once* ſome few obſervations upon your 'familiar letters;' and this I mean to do ſolely in refutation of thoſe particular paſſages which are directed with much vehemence againſt myſelf, well knowing how readily you would build a triumph on my ſilence, until it has been made thus publicly known that I totally decline, upon all future occaſions, the unprofitable labour of a controverſial correſpondence with you. An additional reaſon for this declaration may be collected in the courſe of this

(A) See Notes at the End.

letter

letter, from ſpecimens of your approved ſkill in the art of miſrepreſentation.

As to all your arguments upon the general merits of the queſtion itſelf (the repeal of the teſt laws) it would be idle, impertinent and ridiculous in me to produce a refutation of them from my own pen, when ſo full a diſcuſſion and ſo deliberate a deciſion have now taken place againſt you, for the *third* time, from the collective wiſdom of our preſent repreſentatives in parliament; to ſay nothing of the ſentiments and conduct of many former parliaments; to ſay nothing of many able publications of the paſt and preſent times, which ſtrongly confirm the wiſdom of the late deciſion. There is one publication, it is true, which perhaps it will be kind in me to recommend to your peruſal from your known paſſion for controverſy, as I think you may employ yourſelf upon it during the reſt of your life, provided you will undertake for once not merely to anſwer but to refute its arguments. It is entitled 'a review of the caſe of the Proteſtant Diſſenters,' not that I expect you will feel diſpoſed to meddle with it, as I ſuſpect it may be traced to the ſame powerful and victorious hand under which you have already ſmarted!

It is time, however, to fulfil my engagement, by a refutation of thoſe particular paſſages which immediately relate to myſelf. After which I take my leave of you for ever in the irkſome light of cavil and diſputation, though I can aſſure you, Sir, in other lights I ſhall never fail to meet you, not only with civility, but with pleaſure and good-will.

The firſt paſſage in my ſermon which appears to have given you much offence, contains a very ſolemn declaration of my ſincerity and conviction, upon that intereſting ſubject which I deemed a point of ſuch religious as well as civil importance, as to deſerve my notice from the pulpit. Now did I not recollect that the perſon thus offended has been long accuſtomed to a bold invaſion of the moſt ſacred ſubjects under the ſpecious pretence of 'free enquiry,' I confeſs I ſhould have been greatly ſurprized at this ground of attack. But as things are circumſtanced in this reſpect, I can only be concerned on *your* account, not mine, that you ſhould ſeek to ridicule that 'uncommon ſolemnity' with which, as you obſerve, I introduce my diſcourſe: neither did it ſurprize me in the ſmalleſt degree. My diſturbed imagination, I muſt own, has ever conſidered the queſtion *then* before me as a matter very cloſely connected

nected with the civil and religious intereſts of our excellent conſtitution. It was a queſtion, too, upon which many artful and dangerous aſſertions were in daily circulation from writers of your ſtamp, and in the ſupport of which no efforts were neglected to influence, inflame and miſlead the public opinion. I was then preparing to addreſs a very numerous and much eſteemed congregation not only in vindication of myſelf and other *miniſters* as well as *members* of the Church of England, from the ſerious charges of hypocriſy and profaneneſs, on account of our compliance with the teſt laws, but alſo in explanation of thoſe grounds upon which, as their miniſter, I could ſolemnly aſſure them of my own decided ſentiments, 'the ſettled 'principles and conviction of my heart as I 'hope for mercy from the God of truth!' To appeal to God therefore, under ſuch circumſtances, upon ſo important a queſtion, eſpecially, as you obſerve, 'from ſo ſacred a place 'as the pulpit,' was almoſt an unavoidable effect of the goodneſs of my cauſe, and of the perfect ſincerity with which I undertook it. I have never thought ſo lightly as you ſeem to do of the ſteps which have been lately taken in this matter to obtain a repeal of the teſt laws. I have always regarded them (and my 'ſtrange' opinion has found many advocates in a certain great national meeting which is eſtabliſhed by

law) I have always regarded them as pointedly hoſtile and dangerous to our happy conſtitution, as well in church as ſtate; and therefore I conceived that the greateſt ſolemnity was due to that public declaration of my ſentiments from the truly important ſituation which I have the honour to hold in this populous and diſtinguiſhed town. You, Sir, on the other hand, have ungenerouſly aſſigned a very different motive for that ſerious appeal. You inſinuate that 'ſuch a ſolemn form of oath 'is *never* uſed except in caſes in which a man 'ſuppoſes that there may be ſome cauſe to 'ſuſpect his veracity.' I now appeal to every hearer or reader of the paſſage in queſtion whether *your* inference or *mine* be the moſt natural and the moſt obvious; and till it ſhall appear that a ſuſpicion of my veracity has been more generally excited by it than I have preſent reaſon to believe, I not only deny the abſurdity of that paſſage, but I maintain its particular propriety on ſo important an occaſion, and I reprobate your diſingenuous conſtruction of it.

You next accuſe me, I obſerve, of 'railing 'accuſations, evil ſpeaking, calumny,' and other ſimilar offences in direct violation of the precept in my text. In your ſtrictures upon my ſermon you muſt have certainly been much

much diſtreſſed for matter of abuſe, to find yourſelf compelled to deſcend to this charge. I have certainly uſed no expreſſions and ſuggeſted no ideas of this tendency, which have not been abundantly juſtified, and indeed rendered neceſſary, by your proceedings; and a late moſt decided majority in the houſe of commons has deliberately eſtabliſhed their propriety. This anſwer might ſufficiently exculpate me from the preſent charge, had I uttered a more 'railing accuſation' than any which your ingenuity has hitherto picked out of my ſermon; but, whatever faults it may be charged with in many other reſpects, I believe very few will ſay that it is written with an uncharitable or unchriſtian temper. I have even prefaced and qualified the word *violent* with an expreſſion of reluctance and regret, which a more candid commentator would have noticed and approved. It ſhewed my unwillingneſs to employ even that epithet againſt your proceedings had not truth made it neceſſary. As to the precedent which you wiſh to draw for the conduct of your meetings, from the conſtitutional petitions of the ſubject againſt grievances, I ſhall readily refer the fitneſs of that precedent to any fair obſerver of your ſuppoſed hardſhips, and of the language of certain reſolutions at Leiceſter, and many other places; to ſay nothing of your own 'familiar

'liar letter' to Mr. Pitt. I certainly might have noticed with much greater cenſure, your clamorous, and I *muſt ſay*, violent proceedings, without having forſaken the ſpirit of my text. A leſs forcible cenſure I could not poſſibly offer conſiſtently with my duty and conſiſtently with truth.

In the ſcriptures themſelves many ſtronger accuſations are alleged againſt evil-doers than any which you have remarked in my ſermon or even in my notes with your utmoſt latitude of unfair repreſentation. Your better employment would have been to diſprove the difference which ſubſiſts between thoſe ſpirited expreſſions of reproof which are warranted by truth and required by neceſſity (though I ſtill have employed them as ſparingly as poſſible) and thoſe illiberal attacks which are too often made without diſtinction or moderation in the heat of diſappointment and anger. Here, therefore, I ſhall leave your uncandid obſervations on this head.

To thoſe puerile expreſſions (in pages 4 and 6) reſpecting the inſanity of my notions, it is ſufficient to obſerve with Polonius,--' though ' this be madneſs, yet there's *method* in't!'

As to your comment upon my italic dreſs of the words ' *other public uſes*,' I deſire to leave every

every man to his own ſenſe of that expreſſion, and of the propriety of that particular dreſs. For my own part I think it *very becoming*. The expences of your diſtrict meetings, your numerous and long advertiſements, your ſyſtematic lines of correſpondence and *co-operation* are undoubtedly conſiderable (though perhaps not of *much public uſe*) but ſtill my ſuſpicious turn of mind and diſturbed imagination muſt crave your indulgence on this ſubject, and I verily believe that a great part of this kingdom is afflicted with ſymptoms of a ſimilar diſorder in conſequence of your proceedings. Not that I by any means think you 'ready to take arms to overturn the government.' I hope and believe you are far from being ready. Still, without being a Quixote, I muſt alſo aſſure you in your individual capacity, and ſome few of your friends in like manner, (but ſtrictly and expreſſly confining this remark to the chief leaders of your party) that I cannot yet perſuade myſelf that you are thought by all your neighbours to be 'as well affected to 'government and as peaceably diſpoſed' as myſelf. As you will of courſe expect my reaſons for this ſtrange notion, I ſhall here take the liberty of reprinting a few extracts from your late publication to the Rev. Mr. Burn, which muſt render it unneceſſary to add another word upon this point. Indeed I feel

myſelf

myſelf much indebted, and I think the public much indebted to the ingenious editor of the following extracts, as they form a neat ſyllabus of your conſtitutional principles, a ſummary yet full evidence of your many *public merits*. (B)

'On this account (ſays Dr. Prieſtley) I rejoice to ſee the warmth with which the cauſe of *Orthodoxy* (that is of long eſtabliſhed opinions, however erroneous) and that of the *Hierarchy* is now taken up by its friends. Becauſe if their ſyſtem be not well founded, they are only accelerating its deſtruction. In fact, they are aſſiſting me in the proper diſpoſal of thoſe grains of *Gunpowder* which have been ſome time accumulating, and at which they have taken ſo great an alarm, and WHICH WILL CERTAINLY BLOW IT UP AT LENGTH; and perhaps as ſuddenly, as unexpectedly, and as completely, as the overthrow of the late arbitrary government of France. If an inhabitant will not ſubmit to a thorough *Examination* and reaſonable *Repairs*, of the building he occupies, the conſequence muſt be that, without Gunpowder. or even a high wind, it muſt ſome time or other fall, and happy may he think himſelf if he can eſcape unhurt from the ruins. If this ſhould be the caſe with the Church of England, the clergy cannot ſay that they have had no *Warning*. They are labouring for its deſtruction much more than I am.

If

If I be laying *Gunpowder*, they are providing the *Match*, and *their* part of the buſineſs ſeems to be in greater forwardneſs than *mine*.'

'What a contraſt is now exhibited between the two rival nations of France and England, and how may Engliſhmen bluſh to look upon it.'

'Another fooliſh and unjuſt *War*, like that with America, which was chiefly urged by the clergy (and ſuch another, if the *Court* propoſes, the clergy will certainly ſecond) can hardly fail to bring their affairs to a criſis*. If they be wiſe, they will conſider *the Signs of the Times*, and be very temperate in all their proceedings. *Fas eſt et ab hoſte doceri.*

'Let them take care leſt, by too vigorouſly reſiſting our application for what was never intended to hurt them, and what in itſelf cannot poſſibly hurt them, they ſhould by their own violence do themſelves the moſt ſerious

* 'When I was attending a debate in the Houſe of Lords in the courſe of the American War, and one of the Biſhops was taking the part of the Miniſter in it, the Duke of Richmond ſuddenly roſe, and bade the Biſhops *beware of War*. 'War,' ſaid he, 'is attended with expence; and if we be diſtreſſed and muſt have money, we know 'where we may get it.' Indeed, the addition of one hundred and fifty millions to the national debt, occaſioned by that War (which may be called a War of the Court and of the clergy) I conſider as a great ſtep towards the deſtruction of the Hierarchy. How powerful an inſtrument of reformation a heavy national debt *may* be, we ſee in a late glorious Revolution in France. May all great *evils* produce as great a *good*.'

evil

evil. I have always been an avowed enemy of all *civil Eſtabliſhments of Chriſtianity*, but many Diſſenters are not ſo. I foreſee, however, that they ſoon will be, and that by means of theſe diſcuſſions, the ſentiment will become more general, in the nation at large. It begins to be adopted even by the Catholics.'

'The *Utility of eccleſiaſtical eſtabliſhments* is a queſtion that it behoves the clergy always to keep out of ſight as much as poſſible. But their rage againſt the Diſſenters will *obtrude* it on the public, and in conſequence of this, if they proceed as they have begun, I ſhould be ſorry to enſure their ſyſtem twenty years longer. Whether I be more pleaſed or diſpleaſed with their preſent violence, let them now judge. The greater their violence, the greater is our confidence of final ſucceſs. † *Becauſe it will excite more public diſcuſſion, which is all that is neceſſary for our purpoſe.*'

'If any perſon, whoſe eye it may catch (the *preface)* take an uſeful hint from it, it will be well; but an old and true proverb ſays, *Experience keeps a dear ſchool, but fools will learn at no other.* Nations, and all great bodies of men, are generally in this ſituation. They

† The paſſage in Italics is here added from the particular wiſh of Dr. Prieſtley, to prove, that there is nothing *improper* in the tendency of theſe extracts.

will

will learn very little except in this dear School.'

So much for the argumentative gunpowder of Doctor Prieſtley!

From the number and unequivocal ſenſe of theſe complete ſentences comprized in a ſingle pamphlet, you ſurely will not think it a ſufficient excuſe for you to ſay that they do not all ſtand in the ſame page of the pamphlet. Four of the extracts are really long ſentences, and the only two ſhort ones are at leaſt as perfect and explicit as the reſt. I much doubt whether another whole 'eſſay on the principles of ci-'vil government' will be able to do away their plain and direct meaning. Shall an Engliſhman bluſh at the contraſt now exhibited between France and England? Shall an Engliſhman wiſh for a like 'glorious revolution?' Certainly a conſiſtent man would migrate to that happier nation after uttering expreſſions or harbouring ideas ſo unworthy of an Engliſhman!

The firſt of your familiar letters I believe has now been ſufficiently noticed, yet I cannot help admiring a ſingular ſtyle of argument in the latter part of it (Page 7) before I ſhall proceed to ſome few other paſſages which relate

to

to myſelf in your ſubſequent letters. ‘ You ſee ‘ me’ (ſays Dr. Prieſtley to his good friends and neighbours, diſclaiming any dangerous views) ‘ you ſee me walk about the ſtreets ‘ very compoſedly, without moleſting any ‘ body, and always behaving civilly to thoſe ‘ who behave civilly to me, and *therefore* I hope ‘ you will not think I have any ſuch diabolical ‘ intention.’ Here then is a ſtrange inference indeed! Guy Fawkes himſelf might have obſerved the ſame conduct (and probably did obſerve it) till the very moment of his detection. I am ſure, Sir, you will be ſecretly aſhamed of this argument, though you may not chuſe to confeſs its abſurdity. Applicable to this paſſage, and to your whole laboured exculpation of yourſelf and of your chief aſſiſtants, is the following very ſhrewd reſolution which was lately paſſed in the common hall, at Leiceſter. ‘ That all which the Diſſenters urge reſpecting ‘ their own moderation is *abſurd*, becauſe no ‘ men give themſelves bad characters.’ You attempt indeed to plead a precedent for your diſtrict meetings, your national meetings, your common funds, et cætera, from the admired ſyſtem of that peaceable ſet of men the Quakers, but I believe every body will ſmile at an example ſo totally inapplicable to your preſent ſubject. Your further reading, it is true, may perhaps induce the next change of your

principles

principles to coincide with thoſe of that reſpectable fraternity, and I heartily wiſh it may; but in the mean time your peaceable appearance in the ſtreets is certainly not a ſufficient proof of your converſion to Quakeriſm, as the very ſame appearance may be obſerved in a barrel of your favourite gunpowder; it ſeems very harmleſs, very quiet, and of no ſeditious tendency at all, but give it only a *proper opportunity*, and you may find it capable of a very *miſchievous exploſion.*

I ſhall ſoon proceed to notice your remaining ſtrictures, as far as they may ſeem to require any particular refutation from myſelf, by their being grounded upon paſſages or material expreſſions in my ſermon; and ſhall then willingly appeal, as you do, to the inhabitants of this place, to determine the merits of your attack, and the ſufficiency of my defence. As to the *purſuit* of an evaſive Proteus, I decidedly and for ever decline it.

——————Non immemor Artis
Omnia transformat Seſe in miracula Rerum,
Ignemque, horribilemque Feram, fluviumque liquentem.

But the propoſed appeal I the more willingly embrace as I do not entertain that opi-

nion of the ignorance of our judges, which you expreſs, Sir, in ſtrong terms, when you caution them againſt me on account of my youth, and againſt that credulity on their part which might otherwiſe be miſled by an impoſing preacher, who ſhould "take advantage of their ignorance." I cannot coincide with you in your fears of this danger. I think that an eminent and characteriſtic diſtinction in the main points of ſenſe, penetration, and independent opinion, may be generally numbered among the happy effects of ingenious induſtry and extenſive commerce: but our appeal, I ſhould imagine, is principally directed to the higher deſcription of inhabitants, though you ſomewhat contemptuouſly treat them, one and all, as mere mechanics and illiterate tradeſmen; and there my own intercourſe with numbers, as well churchmen as diſſenters, compels me to reſiſt your haughty excluſion of them from every approach to literature, philoſophy and ſcience. You probably foreſaw that motives of delicacy muſt prevent me from enlarging upon this ground in my preſent ſituation, or that, if I did, you might artfully accuſe me of the bribery and corruption of intereſted praiſe. I therefore muſt be ſilent: not that I could mean to aſſert that any of our townſmen would have readily diſcovered or can well underſtand the orthodoxy of Socinus, or could

even

even have written your ‘ Corruptions of Chriſtianity ;’ ſtill I truſt even now I may affirm, without a juſt imputation of flattery, that your fears in the preſent caſe are at once inſolent and unneceſſary. You really ſeem afraid that our ‘*ignorant*’ townſmen will believe me if I tell them that all the delegates attending your national meeting of Diſſenters are lineally deſcended from the actual executioner of Charles the firſt; or that, according to the Pythagorean Metempſychoſis, the identical ſoul of Oliver Cromwell is lodged in the body of Docter Prieſtley. But indeed, Sir, you need not apprehend that the inhabitants of Birmingham can be ignorantly miſled by the falſe aſſertions of ſo young a man as I am (while I truſt I never ſhall attempt the experiment either in politics or religion,) whatever the advantages of your graver age and ſuperior talents may on *your* ſide lead you to expect.

I allow you, Sir, moſt readily, an infinite ſuperiority in natural abilities as well as in acquired knowledge; and though you haſtily impute to me an almoſt incredible degree of ignorance, I can cordially offer to thoſe abilities and to that knowledge every juſt ſentiment of deference and reſpect. But we are not convaſſing a ſubject above the reach of common talents, and therefore I ſhould hope

it may not ſeem impertinent to ſay that it is one of the few ſubjects in which I am not ambitious of receiving your inſtructions. It cannot be ſuppoſed that I am ſeriouſly mortified at your obſervations upon my *youth*, ſince you have not ſcrupled to advance the ſame ſilly charge againſt the tranſcendent abilities of our preſent Prime-miniſter. You remind me, I muſt own, of a little anecdote which I have met with, of the father of that miniſter, and, as it ſeems rather appoſite to theſe latter remarks I ſhall place it in a note (C) for your peruſal, but I leave the application of it entirely to yourſelf.

Your ſecond letter, I obſerve, contains two or three quotations from my ſermon, which fall within the limits of my intended reply. The firſt is as follows, 'is there no reaſon' (I have ſaid, ſpeaking of the more violent members of your party as will appear in the paſſage immediately preceding) 'Is there no 'reaſon to receive with ſuſpicion their decla-'rations of reverence to the government' and of 'loyalty to the King' (however ſpeciouſly and pompouſly announced) when the amount of that reverence has been exactly aſcertained by a woeful experience of republican tyranny, and the extent of that loyalty has been exactly delineated with the blood of a King'. From this

this extraordinary paragraph as you call it, you enter into a long unneceſſary detail of well known circumſtances, to eſtabliſh a fact which, I believe, never was denied in any hiſtory of England, which has hitherto been publiſhed; and then, forſooth, you boldly defy me to diſprove the truth of that fact from ſome other hiſtory. The fact is ſimply this, that the independents were the murderers of Charles the firſt. You conſequently arraign me for having brought an injurious accuſation againſt the Preſbyterians of that period, charging *them* with a deed which the independents (and not the Preſbyterians) illegally committed: and I am ſtill further arraigned, I ſee in your ſecond and third letters, for having laid the guilt of that deed, like original ſin, upon the ſame deſcription of GENUINE PRESBYTERIANS who are living at this day, as if I had imputed to them, perſonally, the guilt of an action which was not committed by any generation of that ſect whatſoever. Now the learning of Doctor Prieſtley was by no means neceſſary to ſupport him in an argument thus ſtated, but no fair conſtruction of my whole remarks upon this ſubject can poſſibly accuſe me of having ſaid that any Preſbyterian, properly ſo called, was actually a candidate for the chair of Bradſhaw. I have already obſerved that in the ſentence immediately preceding

this perverted paſſage, and alſo at note (F) in the middle of the *very ſame page*,§ (ſupported as they both are by authorities better worth your attention than mine is) I have taken ſome pains to intimate that I conſider 'the *more violent*' Diſſenters of the preſent day, as a ſet of men very widely different from the ſect of genuine Preſbyterians in the laſt century: that I there ſpeak of men who (as Hume ſays of the independents) go a note higher than the Preſbyterians;—that I ſpeak of the *principles* not the mere *appellations* of 'the more violent brethren" of that ſect (call them what you will,) and I even inſinuate, nay more than inſinuate, that *thoſe principles are ſtill at work* which ought to be regarded with ſuſpicion as having already 'aſcertained by a woeful experience of re-'publican tyranny, the amount of that re-'verence to the government which actuates 'their abettors, and which (I repeat it) have 'already delineated the extent of their loyalty 'with the blood of a King.'

I ſhall eſteem myſelf particularly obliged to thoſe who have an opportunity of adverting to the 13th page of my ſermon, and to the note (F) above mentioned, if they will take the trouble to examine the paſſages† to which I

§ See note (F) in the Sermon.

† A ſimilar reference, to each paſſage in queſtion, where it can be conveniently made, is earneſtly deſired.

have

have referred them. To others I beg leave to ſay that my exact words are theſe. After ſpeaking of the ‘ many well-diſpoſed and ingenuous members of that body (the Diſſenters) in thoſe terms of reſpect which I ſincerely intend, I proceed to the principles of men of a very different deſcription by obſerving, ‘ what ‘ are we to think then of the *views and com-* ‘ *plaints* of *their more violent brethren*?’ Is it fair now to ſay that I charge the real Preſbyterians of the laſt and preſent century with the murder of Charles the Firſt? Doctor Prieſtley, however, does not ſcruple to ſay ſo, and writes two long letters upon this falſe aſſumption!

I confeſs, Sir, I cannot ſee without concern and aſtoniſhment your artful perverſion of the paſſage before-mentioned. What a needleſs diſplay of your reading as an hiſtorian about the Anabaptiſts in Germany, the Arminianiſm of Archbiſhop Laud, and the deſcent of the Memnonites, have you here given to thoſe ‘ *ignorant*’ judges, the inhabitants of Birmingham, upon as plain a point of fact as any in the hiſtory of England! As to my having penetrated into hiſtories inacceſſible to the reſt of mankind, my having authorities unknown to all the world beſide, or my having never read any hiſtory at all, I can receive ſuch

unworthy witticiſms with the moſt perfect indifference. and have merely noticed them to aſk you whether you really can expect to ſerve any cauſe whatever by low inſults of this nature. The ſæviens Sacerdos of your motto (though perhaps my ignorance might tranſlate it ' *Fret not thyſelf* becauſe of the ungodly') is in fact, of a ſimilar complexion. But I confidently hope that my character by no means juſtifies the quotation, and I will readily refer it to any liberal opinion of your moſt partial friends.

The grounds of my ſuſpicion reſpecting the *continued exiſtence* of ſome principles not very favourable to monarchy will be ſufficiently given in my notice of the next paſſage* which you have quoted in your letters; ' that ' the Preſbyterian principles are unqueſtion- ' ably republican.'

In attempting to ſupport your obſervations on this paſſage, you very judiciouſly tranſplant a whole ſentence from the 8th page of my ſermon to the 14th, that by its coming cloſe after the paſſage relating to the death of king Charles, you may bring the words *republican* and *king-killing principles* more advantageouſly together, and this, you know, very cleverly confirms your ſubſequent remark in the 18th

* See pages 9 and 12 of your familiar Letters- Firſt Part.

page

page, that I repreſent the whole body of Diſſenters as being actually armed with a king-killing dagger. But you ſhall make the moſt of this contrivance, and the paſſages ſhall ſtand as you have placed them, but I feel perſuaded that very few of our readers of any ſect or perſuaſion whatſoever, will approve of your conduct in this inſtance; very few will conſent to this unfair conſtruction of a very plain ſentence, as if I had aſſerted that there is little or no difference between a theoretical preference for a republican form of government, and an actual intention to aſſaſſinate a monarch. Surely, Sir, this treatment of me can do you no credit, and your cauſe no ſervice. But let us proceed in the preſent queſtion. To diſprove my aſſertion reſpecting the republican turn of Preſbyterianiſm, you bid me look towards Scotland, and the conduct of the Scotch lords and commons ſince the union. You probably may wiſh that I would *fix* my eyes there, but I beg leave to look about me, and I deſire you to do the ſame. Your argument from Scotland ſhall have all the force that you deſire, or at leaſt as much as it can properly have, and certainly you have a full right to argue that if the Scots had been diſaffected to the preſent government or to the preſent royal family, they might poſſibly have paid more regard than they

they did to the late invitations of their friends in England, who have expreſſed ſo much uneaſineſs at the 'injurious' treatment of that nation. I can truly aſſure you, Sir, it is the furtheſt from my thoughts to ſpeak diſreſpectfully of the Scottiſh nation, and even if I ſaw ſome reaſon to invalidate your argument either from the hiſtory, ſituation, or other circumſtances of Scotland, I ſhould decline ſo invidious a taſk. But ſince I am deſirous to look more into the world, why not look a little towards Holland? Why not *among* the cantons of Switzerland? Why not make a little viſit to that prime ſeat of calviniſm, Geneva? Not a word is mentioned of theſe calviniſtic republics, becauſe they are expreſſly in proof of my argument. You tell me I am ignorant of the ſtate of Scotland, but I cannot give you in return even that poor excuſe. Nay, I feel it juſtly due to your acknowledged learning, to confeſs that when I ſee your blindneſs in *any* point of hiſtory, I much ſuſpect it to be wilful. Quibbles and evaſions may be worked into a pamphlet upon the ſtrict ſenſe, the exact form, and the preciſe nature of a pure republic; and other evaſions may be offered about the poſſible predilections 'of ſingle ſpeculative men,' but I ſhall repeat my aſſertion, Sir, upon the foregoing examples, 'that the preſbyterian principles are unqueſtionably republican.' I

have

have purpoſely omitted many direct proofs of a ſimilar concluſion upon this ſubject, from writers of high reſpectability, becauſe the beſt arguments may be firſt ingeniouſly miſtated and then plauſibly evaded, but facts cannot be ſo ſucceſsfully diſproved.

Still, I ſay, directing my further remarks upon this head, to men of your '*more violent*' deſcription, among thoſe who are ſo commonly ſpoken of under the general term Preſbyterian, (though indeed not entitled to that name in its genuine and ſtrict ſenſe) ſtill, I ſay, what became of thoſe ſectaries or rather the republican principles of thoſe ſectaries by whom Charles the firſt was brought to the ſcaffold? And this, it may be ſeen, is the principal and plain meaning of that paſſage which it ſuited your purpoſe to tranſpoſe, for reaſons already given, from the 8th to the 14th page of my diſcourſe. Place it where you will, I have ſhewn it to be unqueſtionably true even in that ſtricter ſenſe which it was not particularly deſigned to bear in the original place from which you artfully removed it, as the *ſole occaſion* of my ſermon (the 'certain 'diſſatisfied members of our public body,' ſee page the 4th) would have ſufficiently ſhewn to a more liberal opponent. Not that I condeſcend to aſk an interpretation from the candour

dour of Doctor Prieſtley. I ſhould be aſhamed to accept any thing from ſo ſcanty a ſtock. I have therefore juſtified my *maxim* (as you call it) in its ſtricteſt ſenſe, and ſhall now proceed to juſtify it alſo in a common acceptation of the word *Preſbyterian*, as oppoſed at this time to the members of the Church of England; and this common acceptation of the word, as a *general term* upon the late queſtion, may be obviouſly accounted for by any except yourſelf, and will be found to be adopted in almoſt every ſpeech, pamphlet, or familiar letter upon the ſaid ſubject.

Names of parties, Sir, are changing every day, but principles are a long-lived generation. Where, then, are the principles of ſome leading characters who ſunk again into the general maſs when the reſtoration happily took place? I fear I am not ſingular in tracing them ſometimes in that heterogeneous collection of principles, which at this day ſubſiſts not only in a marvellous variety, but in a direct contradiction to each other. I propoſe to eſtabliſh this opinion unqueſtionably (except indeed by thoſe who *queſtion* the plaineſt as well as *greateſt* truths) by giving you a copious quotation from a pamphlet already mentioned. The author of it, whoever he may be, will, I truſt, excuſe me for having thus produced in

place

place of my own language his ample confirmation of my argument from the ſuperior ſtyle in which it is expreſſed.

† 'It is much to be lamented, that the fact, 'which is alleged as a ſecond ground of the 'Non-conformiſts claim on the juſtice of the 'country, though an univerſal acknowledg-'ment is again pretended, ſhould be diſputa-'ble. Namely, their loyalty to his Majeſty 'and the eſtabliſhed government,* and the 'ſincerity of their friendſhip to the public 'peace both in Church and ſtate.‡ It might 'ſeem invidious to ſay, nor ſhall it be ſaid, 'of the majority of Diſſenters, that they are 'inſincere in theſe profeſſions. Were the ac-'tual feelings of the individuals the true 'ſtandard of the principles of a party, the 'Non-conformiſts of the preſent times might 'paſs for a loyal body, friends to public peace. 'But the truth is, that when the firſt contenti-'ons, which have given riſe to any party, are 'a little ſubſided; the majority, who from ac-'cidental cir umſtances, from birth and fami-'ly-connections, or perhaps, in a country like 'this, from connections in trade and com-'merce, give their names to it, and paſs in

† Review of the Caſe of the Proteſtant Diſſenters.

* Caſe § 3. ‡ Caſe.

'the

'the catalogue for its adherents, know nothing
'of its origin and real principles; and, while
'the tranquillity of public affairs ſuffers them
'to be governed by their own minds, are but
'looſely attached to it, and enter little into its
'views: and yet theſe ſame perſons are eaſily
'wrought upon, and inſpired with very differ-
'ent ſentiments, if an unexpected turn in
'public affairs, offers a fair occaſion to their
'leaders. Hence the real character of any ſect
'or party hath, in truth, little connection with
'the general diſpoſitions of its nominal ad-
'herents, in quiet times. The diſpoſitions of
'the leaders, with reſpect to party views,
'make up the whole character of the party. It
'is yet within our memory, that numerous
'clans of Highlanders, which for many years
'back had been compoſed of peaceable and
'quiet ſubjects, no ſooner heard their Chief-
'tains pipe upon the hills, than they roſe to a
'man, Rebels armed.

'Now if the leaders of the modern non-
'conformiſts are 'hearty and ſincere friends
'to the public peace both in church and ſtate,'*
'whence is it, that writings of many among
'them capable of far better things, breathe a
'ſpirit of the moſt virulent malignity againſt
'the eſtabliſhment? Whence is it, that they

* Caſe.

'are

'are uſed to treat the ſubject of civil liberty
'in a manner that hath given too much reaſon
'to ſuſpect, that the principles of a non-confor-
'miſt in religion, and a republican in politics,
'are inſeparably united? Can *they* wiſh the
'peace of the Church, who wiſh not its ſtabi-
'lity? Can they wiſh its ſtability, who think
'that the prelatical hierarchy is a violation of
'religion both natural and revealed? That
'people, in the communion of the eſtabliſhed
'Church, may think themſelves religious, as
'the deformed think themſelves handſome?
'Or may be religious, as trees may be acci-
'dentally fruitful in an unfriendly ſoil, but
'that the conſtitution is not religion nor cal-
'culated to promote it? That the hierarchy,
'conſidered as a corporation, is unconſtituti-
'onal? That it is baneful to learning? That
'prelacy hurts morality? That the whole of
'the Church-ritual is hurtful to popular piety?
'That epiſcopacy is neither of divine nor hu-
'man right, but a human wrong, ſuppreſſive
'of divine and human rights? That it is EX-
'ECRABLE? That Wake, Potter, Herring,
'Secker, all riſqued chriſtianity to preſerve
'the eſtabliſhment?' Theſe are the ſentiments
'inculcated by Mr. Robinſon, in his *plan of*
'*lectures upon the principles of non-conformity*: a
'work approved, it is to be remembered, by
'the Eaſtern Aſſociation.‡ How theſe ſenti-
'ments

‡ Convened at Harlow.

'ments, or the approbation of theſe ſenti-
'ments, can be lodged in the ſame breaſt with
'*a cordial and ſincere friendſhip to the public peace in*
'*Church and State*,† is a myſtery not eaſy to be
'explained.

'Nor is it leſs difficult to underſtand, how
'a principle of genuine loyalty to any King, or
'attachment to any government but a mere
'democracy, can be reconciled to that impaſſi-
'oned fondneſs for the democratic form, which
'exults in the American revolution, as the
'moſt important ſtep in the progreſſive courſe
'of human improvement, next to the intro-
'duction of chriſtianity; and places the glory
'of the American States in their emancipation
'from LORDS, from BISHOPS, and from
'KINGS.* Nor is it eaſy to underſtand, how
'good wiſhes to the compound of Church and
'State united, can conſiſt with an opinion, that
'the demolition of the eſtabliſhment is a thing
'ſo requiſite, for the perfect reformation of
'religion; that any civil commotions are to
'be expected with complacency, to be deſired
'rather than feared, which may be neceſſary,
'as doubtleſs great commotions will be neceſ-
'ſary, for the attainment of that happy end.‡

† Caſe.

* See Dr. Price's Obſervations upon the importance of the American Revolution.

‡ See the concluſion of Dr. Prieſtley's Hiſtory of Corruptions.

State

'That the moſt unexceptionable eſtabliſhment
'of religion would be, that all the inhabitants
'of the country ſhould be obliged to ſupport
'ſome form of the chriſtian religion. That
'even this eſtabliſhment would not be perfect
'liberty in matters of religion. But that few
'perſons who object to it in *the preſent ſtate of*
'*things*, becauſe, though not perfect liberty, it
'might MAKE WAY for it.'*

'While theſe are the avowed principles of
'its leaders, let them not pretend that friend-
'ſhip to the peace of the Church and State,
'attachment to the Government, and loyalty
'to the King are the characters of Non-confor-
'mity. Many Non-conformiſts, it is confeſſed,
'the majority, it is hoped, are at preſent, in
'themſelves, peaceable, well-affected, loyal
'ſubjects. Every churchman will with plea-
'ſure recollect many of that character, within
'the circle of his own acquaintance. But
'what ſecurity are their private diſpoſitions
'for the conduct of the party? What ſecurity
'for their own conduct, if any occaſion ſhould
'ariſe to ſtir up party zeal, while the ſpirit of
'the SOLEMN LEAGUE and COVENANT
'breathes as it does, in the approved writings
'of their moſt admired teachers?' (D)

* Prieſtley on the firſt Principles of Government. Page 201.

I ſhall add no more upon the preſent ſubject in proof of that maxim which has ſo much offended you: and have only to obſerve, reſpecting your notice of the preſent Preſbyterianiſm of Scotland, though ſubject to a monarch, that if your candour will extend to the peruſal of 'Warburton's alliance between Church and ſtate' you will find a ſufficient reaſon for the eſtabliſhment of Preſbyterianiſm in Scotland and of epiſcopacy in England, and alſo the equity of that converſion. See the 1ſt chap. 3rd book.

Should you be diſpoſed to argue that by the ſame mode of reaſoning the number of Roman Catholics ſhould eſtabliſh popery in Ireland (becauſe the majority are Roman Catholics) you muſt firſt prove the pope to be a member of ſome proteſtant ſect of chriſtians. On the other hand I argue that by this very mode of reaſoning the Diſſenters in England ſhould not *demand* eſtabliſhment, but ſhould be ſatisfied with ample toleration.

But I am deſirous to releaſe myſelf and my readers as ſoon as poſſible from an employment ſo little to my taſte as the preſent is, though ſeemingly ſo eſſential to your comfort, if not to your exiſtence. I believe I have now noticed every leading remark in your firſt ſet of letters,

letters, which might ſeem to require my particular refutation. I have not intentionally overlooked any paſſage to which you have been able to give the faintest colour of juſt criticiſm. There is one circumſtance, indeed, ſtill remaining to receive my hearty diſapprobation far beyond the reſt, though not relating to myſelf: I mean your unhandſome and unneceſſary ſarcaſms againſt characters *at leaſt as reſpectable* as your own, and which you have moſt illiberally introduced into your letters, when your only profeſſed engagement was to refute the charges advanced in *my Sermon*. But I ſee how commonly you gratify this ſatirical turn of mind, and doubtleſs the preſent objects of it will experience (what I do in that *one* inſtance) a mixed ſentiment of pity and contempt: pity for ſuch a degradation of your talents, and contempt for ſuch a proof of your malevolence. †

In former reigns, I muſt obſerve (in the *reign* of Oliver Cromwell for example) you give us to underſtand that you ſhould have made a better figure than you are allowed to

† Your virulent abuſe of the writings and memory of Dean Swift cannot fail to return with increaſed force upon yourſelf, and his character is above your reach.

Swift expreſsly ſtates the reaſon why the Dutch diſpenſe with their teſt among their military men, in his 'advantages propoſed by repealing the ſacramental teſt:' but your aſſertion you know, would paſs for an argument till it received a refutation.

do at preſent. But it ſeems ‘ another king is ariſen who knoweth not *Joſeph*’—Prieſtley. You naturally complain therefore, in the very ſame ſentence that you cannot have acceſs to him, and can have no opportunity of ‘ informing ‘ the king better’. Indeed, Sir, it is perhaps rather hard as well as ſingular that you ſhould ſtill remain *incog.* and that no notice ſhould be taken of you, eſpecially ſince the publication of your letters to the Rev. Mr. Burn.

After all, I had nearly overlooked a very alarming charge in the argument of your third letter, ſetting forth the inconcluſiveneſs of my reaſoning on the ſubject of my ſermon. This indeed, if eſtabliſhed, would convict my poor ſermon of downright abſurdity and falſhood from the beginning to the end. Now the ſermon pretends to no particular merits or excellence of any kind; but the preſent vindication of it from thoſe ſpecific charges upon which this general charge of inconcluſiveneſs is raiſed, has completely reconciled me to this accuſation without any further notice of it, eſpecially ſince the ſame charge has even been advanced by the ſame licentious hand againſt the writings of St. Paul himſelf!

But to draw to a concluſion.—Your firſt ſet of letters, I may reaſonably preſume, Sir, contains

tains your chief ſtrictures upon my obnoxious ſermon, ſince you pick out and tranſpoſe as you think proper either ſentences, parts of ſentences, or ſingle expreſſions both from the ſermon and the notes; rendering an obſcure name much greater diſtinction than it deſerves. The generality of our Judges, I believe, will not expect or deſire me to notice you any further: my time and attention are, I truſt, more properly and more uſefully employed. I ſend you, then, by this firſt and laſt opportunity, as many acknowledgments as may in future become due to you for all that you may hereafter publiſh reſpecting me or my ſermon; not omitting my beſt thanks (if rightly directed) for an anonymous preſent of your 'familiar letters,' (E) received ſoon after my return, when you might have perceived by my previous advertiſement that I did not deſire the *Etiquette of a donation*.

For the letters themſelves you will expect no thanks, and indeed, as far as they concern *myſelf*, your unjuſt invectives and unfounded aſſertions do not merit the notice I have now given them. At the ſame time it was due to the inhabitants of this place, from the ſhort date of my acquaintance with them (and to my pariſhioners in particular) that I once ſhould prove to them in this public manner,

on ſo pointed an occaſion, how fully I defy even the celebrity of your name, the ſtrength of your abilities, and the tricks of your ingenuity, to controvert by fair means what I aſſert from the pulpit. My congregation, I am confident, ſhall never have juſt reaſon to ſay that I preſume to offer them a ſingle ſentiment or precept upon which *my own principles* (F) *are not ſettled*,—and which I am not able to defend. A more direct apology would be made to the public for my preſent intruſion, if a knowledge of your ready miſconſtruction of my ſilence had not rendered that intruſion in ſome degree unavoidable. I have ſometimes deſcended, (but chiefly in my notes,) to a little imitation of your *familiar* raillery, and low witticiſms, but, in theſe inſtances ſome allowance will be made no doubt, for the contagion of example, while I hope and believe that I have never ſuffered that example to betray me into ſcurrility; neither have I been guilty of a wilful miſrepreſentation. A plain reply to your chief comments on my ſermon is all that I profeſs to give. Many who know you beſt would have adviſed me, I believe, to make no reply at all, becauſe your *cenſure* is an innocent calumny; nor has it once been obſerved of your *candour* that in all your voluminous (and many haſty) publications you have ever acknowledged a ſingle miſtake. You can always find ſome-

thing

thing to aſſert you know, and whether right or wrong you can publiſh another pamphlet. Probably you will prove the truth of this remark upon the preſent occaſion; and I may ſeem imprudent in thus tempting an abuſive reply by having previouſly told you that it will remain unanſwered, and conſequently the moſt unfounded aſſertions may be ſafely advanced: I ſhall never think it neceſſary to refute them. Yes, Sir, you may follow, unmoleſted and unnoticed, (as far as I am concerned) the buſineſs of making little ſixpenny ſquibs without my expoſing their worthleſs contents. Improper inſinuations and contemptuous expreſſions from a paſſionate and diſappointed aſſailant I can chearfully receive and cordially forgive; but the unwarrantable aſſumptions and deliberate miſrepreſentations of an old and ſubtile polemic, whoſe only *ſettled* principle is that of litigation, muſt render it for ever impoſſible that I ſhould accept the propoſed partnerſhip for retailing old eſſays upon a threadbare ſubject,—for manufacturing, I may ſay, ſo inferiour an article in this eminent emporium for ingenious labours! My '*cowardly*' profeſſion muſt be afraid to follow you as far as you may run, dividing and ſubdividing a queſtion which has been already conſidered and diſcuſſed in every poſſible light!

Your ſecond ſet of letters, I ſee, is a trite eſſay upon the corporation and teſt acts, occaſionally introducing my name indeed for ſome illiberal or unjuſt comment upon my ſermon; but this may be ſufficiently ſhewn by a ſhort appendix to this letter, as a ſpecimen of your title to my further attention.

And now, Sir, you may boldly proceed, without fear of future contradiction, with your promiſed eſſay on toleration, and the fifty more eſſays which you yet may publiſh (like your 'fourth, fifth and fiftieth' eſſays to obtain a repeal of the teſt laws,) and when, if ever, that fruitful topic ſhall be exhauſted, you may return, ſtill unmoleſted, to my youth, my ignorance, my veracity, my ſolemnity of ſtile, my civil and my religious principles!

I remain,

Rev. Sir,

Your real well-wiſher,

SPENCER MADAN.

Birmingham, March 18, 1790.

APPENDIX.

AS the ſecond ſet of Doctor Prieſtley's 'familiar letters' were publiſhed before my abſence from Birmingham would allow me to reply to his firſt ſtrictures on my ſermon, I am induced to add ſome curſory obſervations upon that ſecond ſet alſo, by the laſt public opportunity which can poſſibly occur to me for ſo unwelcome a taſk as that of expoſing the faulty features of an eminent character. That the violent pen of Doctor Prieſtley ſhould be the vehicle of artful miſrepreſentation or of virulent invective, is indeed now rendered a matter of regret rather than *ſurprize*: but that a palpable error in a plain point of that hiſtory upon which he is profeſſedly writing ſhould be circulated through the world by ſo accurate and able an hiſtorian as Doctor Prieſtley is a circumſtance hardly credible! Not that I deſire after ſtating this fact, to retaliate upon him with an inſulting accuſation of impoſſible ignorance, or to tell him with a ſneer that he perhaps has 'authorities unknown to all the 'world and hiſtories inacceſſible to all mankind,' but I merely notice it as one ſtriking inſtance of that blameable and blind impetuoſity by which the talents of a Prieſtley are ſo unhappily degraded. The error is in itſelf of

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ſmall moment, and is ſuch as will probably be obſerved and corrected by the generality of his readers, but it ſhews how unguardedly thoſe talents and that name are diſgraced by their poſſeſſor when they might have ſecured to him a never-ceaſing reſpect! Now the particular dates of the corporation act and teſt act may be eaſily aſcertained by every reader of any hiſtory of the reign of Charles the ſecond; but Doctor Prieſtley has aſſerted in contradiction to all hiſtory, though expreſſly giving an hiſtorical account of theſe acts, that the origin of the corporation act was *ſubſequent* to that of the teſt act. I ſhall here add the paſſage upon which I offer this remark, that every reader may determine for himſelf the fairneſs of my inference.

'Nor *when the teſt act was made* (ſays Dr. Prieſtley in the 4th page of his 2nd ſet of familiar letters) was any evil dreaded from the Proteſtant Diſſenters. Nay they themſelves moſt zealouſly concurred in paſſing it. The danger *then* was from the Catholics only, on account of the next heir to the crown being a Catholic. *Afterwards* mere *party ſpirit* and not any regard to the *ſafety of the ſtate* gave birth to the *Corporation act.*' But paſſing over this manifeſt anachroniſm, I cannot help obſerving how roundly Doctor Prieſtley advances an erroneous account of this matter upon his own ipſe dixit!

I ſhall

I ſhall confine this appendix to two additional extracts from the ſame pamphlet.

Firſt, then, the following paſſage will be found in the firſt page of that pamphlet.

'Mr. Madan ſays, page 12, 'that the Diſ-'ſenters are under no diſability which can 'poſſibly be avoided conſiſtently with our own 'ſecurity' that is (Dr. Prieſtley adds) the ſe-'curity of the *Church*,' and upon this paſſage Dr. Prieſtley proceeds to comment.

Now the original paſſage in my ſermon is as follows, 'It is needleſs (I obſerve) to vindicate the church from the charge of intolerant or perſecuting principles, when the Diſſenters themſelves are a perpetual and moſt expreſs proof of our contrary conduct, as they are under no ſingle diſability which can poſſibly be avoided *conſiſtently with our own ſecurity*; that is they are ſimply excluded from offices of *civil* or *eccleſiaſtical* power, becauſe their poſſeſſion of thoſe offices has been proved incompatible with the welfare of the Eſtabliſhed Church and *with the ſafety of the civil government*.' See the ſermon page 12.

Doctor Prieſtley's ſtatement of only *one part* of the preceding ſentence enables him to repreſent me as being *ſolely* apprehenſive of a repeal

repeal of the teſt laws on account of the church. He therefore does not quote the *whole* ſentence becauſe I have expreſſly added, the *ſafety of the civil government.* Even if I had not mentioned the latter words, his conſtruction of my meaning might have ſeemed uncandid, as my congregation were equally members of the church and friends of the government; but as I actually have expreſſed the words *civil government*, it is both an *uncandid* and *falſe* repreſentation of the paſſage. I appeal to the moſt prejudiced examiner.

A ſecond inſtance will be found in page 12, of the ſame pamphlet. Doctor Prieſtley ſays, 'How weak, then, you ſee, is this barrier 'which Mr. Madan ſays, page 23, the wiſ-'dom of a former age has erected for its de-'fence' viz. that of your church (as Dr .Prieſtley aſſerts and, as Mr. Madan has *not* aſſerted) 'and which the experience of a century has 'proved to be effectual.'

Now the paſſage referred to in my ſermon appears to be as follows, where the word *conſtitution* is expreſſly mentioned, and where the word church does not once occur throughout the whole page. 'They condemn (I obſerve) the improper and unreaſonable claims of all encroaching ſectaries, and perceive the danger which our happy *conſtitution* would incur if the raſhneſs

raſhneſs of the preſent age ſhould remove that barrier which the wiſdom of a former age has erected for *its* defence, and which the experience of a century has proved to be effectual.'

To ſuch an opponent, thus unfairly aſſerting that when I have expreſſly written the reſpective words *government* and *conſtitution* I have merely written or intended the word *church*, what future conduct can I poſſibly obſerve but that of ſilent and total diſregard! Here then I ſhall drop the ſubject, and after a peruſal of theſe few plain extracts from the *ſecond* ſet of letters, added to my fuller obſervations on the *firſt*, I truſt the reaſons of that decided ſilence with which I ſhall receive any ſimilar aſperſions from the ſame quarter cannot fail to be underſtood, juſtified, and approved. At the ſame time I cannot help confeſſing how much I muſt lament, in ſecret, that any wayward love of controverſy, any miſplaced ſallies of a petulant wit, any poor pride of ſingularity, any *bolder* principles which I forbear to name, ſhould have power to proſtitute ſuperior talents to ſuch unworthy and diſgraceful purpoſes! that my great opponent ſhould forego that high point of view in which his attainments have placed him as a ſcholar; that he ſhould not remember that higher point of view in which

which his profeſſion has placed him as a miniſter; that he ſhould not remember that higheſt point of view in which he might be placed immoveably by a due ſupport of theſe united characters; not only diſtinguiſhed by the rich, though ſecondary, ſplendor of human learning, but by the ſolid value and prime honours of a practical knowledge of the *goſpel of peace*.

I now reſpectfully refer myſelf, not to the partiality of private friendſhip, but to the candour of public judgment!

SPENCER MADAN.

NOTES.

(A) In humble imitation of that familiar ſtyle in which Dr. Prieſtley has entertained his readers with a tea drinking anecdote of Mr. Burke, the comic ſtory of the Negro, the droll conceit of Mr. Madan's being a Welchman, Biſhop Horſley's children being Catholics, and the delicate ſtory of his own tattered pair of breeches, I take the liberty of offering a little ſtory, which is at leaſt as appoſite and important as any which it preſumes to copy. A lady of much beauty, vivacity and good ſenſe once told it to ſome friends with whom I had the happineſs *to drink a diſh of tea*.

Mr. A. and Mr. B. having a diſpute and Mr. A. finding Mr. B. very obſtinate in his argument, the latter was reminded by the former of a ſimilar diſpute in which two clergymen contended on a queſtion in metaphyſics. Referees (ſays he) at length were choſen to decide it. One of the diſputants choſe a neighbouring clergyman, the other named a blackſmith.--Mr. B. loſing all patience at this metaphyſical digreſſion interrupted Mr. A. with a poh! What could a blackſmith know of metaphyſics? True, replied Mr. A. very coolly, but he would *never give it up!*

Though

(B) Though the extracts given in the text may juſtify ſome doubts about the 'peaceable and well affected diſpoſition' of Dr. Prieſtley in a civil light yet the merit of conſiſtency is certainly his due on the ſubject of *eſtabliſhment* in matters of religion. A ſhort ſpecimen is therefore added from his letters to Dr. Price which have been long before the public, and which the public will do well to remember, before they follow an *avowed wanderer* in a point of the firſt conſequence, where uncertainty is at preſent dreadful, and where an error muſt in future be fatal!

'On the other hand (ſays Dr. Prieſtley) I ſhall not be offended if you ſhould account for my *roving from one opinion to another* by ſuppoſing that I have a temper of mind too hoſtile *to every thing that is eſtabliſhed*; or if you ſhould ſay that I am more apt to be ſatisfied with any thing belonging to myſelf than with my *opinions*, and that I am not *likely to fix long in any ſcheme*. Certain it is that ſo far from having much fondneſs for the opinions that I received from my education, I have gone on *changing, though always in one direction*, from the time that I began to think for myſelf to the preſent day, and I *will not pretend to ſay when my creed will be fixed*.'

After this language, we cannot be ſurprized that in the preſent familar letters Dr. Prieſtley ſhould alſo recommend his own writings of a political nature as being 'generally conſidered the *boldeſt* and moſt *exceptionable* of any thing on the ſubject in the Engliſh language.

(C) When the late illuſtrious Earl of Chatham was a young member of Parliament, an older member (Sir Robert Walpole I believe) once paſſionately and perhaps rudely obſerved to him that he underſtood it was the practice of ſportſmen to *flog* a young hound when he miſled the pack;—true, ſaid the indignant ſpirit of a Pitt, but when an old hound miſleads the pack, the only way of treating him, is, to *hang him at once*.

(D) It is rather remarkable that Dr. Prieſtley himſelf, when arguing againſt my aſſertion of republican principles as applied to the Preſbyterians ſhould expreſsly obſerve that 'the DISSENTERS as a body, have never ſhewn any preference of a REPUBLICAN government' (ſee page 14 of his firſt ſet of letters, and many other inſtances to the ſame effect.) Why ſhould he ſay this if he really miſunderſtood that ſenſe of the term Preſbyterian in which I chiefly meant to uſe it in the 8th page of my ſermon, and as it is uſed every day in the modern acceptation of the word? The truth is, it lengthened his pamphlet to miſrepreſent that ſenſe, as if I had excluſively applied it to the genuine calviniſts.

Now

Now the Quakers, Roman Catholics, &c. could not poſſibly be conſidered as the parties directly intended in any remarks upon the late queſtion of repeal, and therefore the term Preſbyterian as a general expreſſion for Diſſenters in reference to that repeal was certainly a ſufficient deſignation of the party intended; though in fact (as I have ſhewn) the poſition holds good, in the ſtrict acceptation of the term Preſbyterian, and is if poſſible, ſtill more *unqueſtionable*, when applied to the *more violent* Diſſenters of Dr. Prieſtley's deſcription.

(E) I cannot help ſuſpecting the ſincerity of ſome other compliments received from Dr. Prieſtley. In his firſt page (for example) he deſcribes me as 'the *juſtly-reſpected* rector of St. Philips,' a title which my utmoſt ambition can only wiſh to deſerve! But then alas, every ſubſequent page is labouring to oppoſe that title by ſtating a long catalogue of my diſgraceful principles, my groſs errors and notorious falſehoods, conſequently, if his accuſations be ſerious, what becomes of his compliment?

Permit me to add another ſhort obſervation accidentally omitted in its proper place near the bottom of page 8. I am there anſwering a ſtrong accuſation alledged againſt me, that of having violated the very precept in my text. What I wiſh to obſerve is that a detected ſharper with my watch in his right hand and my purſe in his left, might alſo complain of my railing accuſations, on the ſame ſcriptural grounds, 'ſpeak evil of no man, ſhew meekneſs to all men.' In ſhort, the inference is directly this: tell a man of his vices and he may ſilence you at once by exclaiming 'ſpeak evil of no man.' Now the main and proper queſtion is, is the charge *well founded?* is the accuſation juſt?

(F) Dr. Prieſtley, (it is well known) has long ſince declared the unſettled ſtate of his principles, and their frequent fluctuation:* but though he cannot ſay 'when his creed will be fixed,' his followers, no doubt, may depend upon his ſhewing them a better way *at laſt*, than any which has yet been embraced, upon the ſtricteſt inquiry and the fulleſt conviction, through the courſe of many centuries, by the ableſt heads and beſt hearts that have ever exiſted in the world!

* See the paſſage already quoted in note (3) in Dr. Prieſtley's letters to Dr. Price.

FINIS.

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